

Sixty glorious years of NPS - A time to rededicate ourselves anew to the cause of education, Yearbook Article 2020

It was a 'historic' gathering of students and teachers, who had come from different corners of the world, to be part of a momentous occasion - to celebrate 60 years of National Public School. Having spent 44 years in NPS, first as a student and later, as a teacher, principal, trainer and mentor, to me, it was a privilege to be part of this event, which had effectively brought 58 batches of students and their teachers together under one roof at NPS Rajajinagar, in October 2019. Somehow, it was also apt that this salute to the spirit of the school should unfold in the premises of the first-ever school established by NPS.

NPS first opened its doors to students on December 1, 1959. Over the years, NPS spread its wings and rose rapidly to transform into a flagship brand. The NPS journey is a remarkable story of growth fuelled by grit, determination, self-belief and passion of our founders - Dr. Gopalkrishna and the Dean, Dr (Mrs). Gopalkrishna. Both were singularly committed to a common goal – to provide quality education to children and cultivate values that will stand them in good stead in their lives. They perfectly complemented each other; while one is a visionary, the other, is able to resourcefully translate the dreams into reality. In their own understated and quiet way, they have changed the landscape of learning and touched many lives.

In my eyes, what made this event exceptional is that alumni of all ages, from college students to 60-year-olds, merrily mingled with each other. Emotions ran high, as some hearts were overflowing with joy and enthusiasm, some were nostalgic and teary-eyed as they took a walk down memory lane. It was interesting to observe that during the felicitation ceremony, the teachers, many were over 60 years old, received the maximum and loudest applause for all their painstaking efforts to shape young, feisty minds. Truly, it is a testimony of the deep affection and regard they have for their former teachers.

The Dean's welcome message was met with a resounding applause as well, while the Chairman received a standing ovation as he rose to speak. The applause continued for a long time and almost did not stop. What was palpable in the hall was the sense of pride, gratitude, reverence and the unabashed joy of being a member of this close-knit community. All the people here were bound together by an indefinable bond that probably comes from having shared some of life's most precious moments with each other.

Many people attribute the success of NPS to meticulous planning, eye for detail, organizing capacity and the availability of excellent facilities. I believe our success is the outcome of a child-centered focus, our unflagging enthusiasm and earnestness to give the best to our children, and most importantly, due to the solidarity that exists among our parents, students and teachers, not overlooking our emphasis on imparting values.

In my years as a teacher, I learnt a fundamental truth. Every child is unique. Children have their own distinctive personalities, their own special abilities and their own way of responding to the world around them. Any teacher will agree with me when I say that every class hosts a rich canvas of multi-hued characters. Each is a star in his/her own right:

- Mr/Ms. Responsible, the utterly dependable student
- The artist who comes up with a creative sketch in a flash
- The deep-thinking philosopher who amazes all with his/her wisdom
- The ever-smiling, affable student who cheers up the entire class
- The 'Albert Einstein' of a class, the reason I used to wake up at 3 am to study before teaching

- The student with the perennial twinkle in the eyes (often stoking my curiosity for the reason behind the twinkle!)
- The Moderator/Arbitrator/Harmonizer, who will stop students from fighting and take them all along
- The student with the professorial air, the natural teacher who can easily explain any concept to the rest
- The sports champions, whose endurance, deft moves and sharp techniques never fail to impress
- The talented child who stirs hearts and mind with his/her music
- The math whiz, whose speed at calculation makes one catch his/her breath
- The student who will have the class in splits with his or her rollicking sense of humour
- The silent student, who suddenly springs a deep and thought-provoking question
- The “Hermione Granger” of the class, the first hand to go up when a question is asked
- The heart-warming, generous student, who regularly brings extra food to share with others

Each one of these traits is valuable and needs to be nurtured by the teacher and the school. Frankly, that is what makes a class enjoyable and the teaching profession a meaningful one. Teachers and schools have to work with this knowledge that every child is different and each child’s journey is different. For example, some students carry out complex calculations with ease, while others struggle to master the same. Some have a flair for language while others are challenged to write ten coherent lines. Some may be confident and self-assured and get on a stage to deliver a speech or debate with panache, while others may fumble and be tongue-tied in front of an audience.

Our experience has taught us that all children find their place in the world – their own little niche – sooner if not, a little later. Our job as teachers and adults is to support the child through that journey, with affection and calm, even when their decisions are contrary to our expectations. A consistent message we give our children is not to get distracted by negative comparisons, fear of competition or not to get swayed by peers but to be confident in who they are. To quote the former President of India, the late A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, “Don’t compare your life to others...there is no comparison between the sun and the moon. They shine when it is their time.”

Yes, we believe in helping children climb their own mountains and as high as possible.

As NPS crosses this significant 60th anniversary milestone, the lesson we will carry in our journey forward is this: that success comes with actively pursuing a goal with a single-minded purpose. Also, a committed set of teachers and leaders all working together as a united force towards a shared vision is key to innovation and progress of the school. To me, the alumni meet and celebration only reinforced the need to resolutely rededicate ourselves to the cause of education of children for the greater good. As great leaders of our times have said, time and again, education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.